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EAST AND WEST SERIES

No. 97 1·8 October, 1965

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PRESENTED

# Through Darkness Into Light

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T. L. VASWANI

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EAST AND WEST SERIES

[ Monthly ]

An Interpreter of the Life of the Spirit

9/245

# THROUGH DARKNESS INTO LIGHT

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## MESSAGES AND BLESSINGS

Your Journal is exactly what is needed at this moment and is a clear proof of Sri T. L. Vaswani's high calling as a servant of the Spiritual Hierarchy of this world, the great Masters whom we all venerate, the Prophets and Saints.

I beg you to give me the permission and authorization to reprint some passages of the articles of Sri T. L. Vaswani, in German translation, in our monthly journal.

I give you both my hands and take yours and hope that in this way a living bridge will be built between the East and West. And that is the task we have been born for. Many souls who ensouled persons living in India in the past are born now in Europe or in America and vice versa in order to be able to bring about this harmonization needed in the great plan of evolution of this earth.

*Mrs. M. Mentel*
Austria

I appreciate very much the noble work done by you through the written word. Dadaji's words are most inspiring and encouraging. It is by such spiritual leaders, the youth of India must be guided. I revere Dadaji as a Mahatma and with respectful wishes I beseech his blessings.

*A. J. Adaikalam*
Sacred Heart Church, Madras

The "Series" is a living torch to all, specially to the youths of India. And I am ever grateful to Dadaji for his blessings to humanity through the "Series."

Dadaji is God's Gift to the world. May the Almighty preserve this Gift for a long time! And may Dadaji continue his work of help and healing in this period of turmoil on earth!

*Shri M. Venkatakrishnappa*
Bangalore

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# THROUGH DARKNESS INTO LIGHT

In one way or another, are we not all pilgrims? All in search of the solution of life's problem? What is life? Its meaning and value? Its plan and purpose?

As I survey the story of man from the dawn of history, I find that there have been developed different conceptions of life. One of them is the conception that life is conquest. Out of it grows the view so popular with young men today that knowledge is power. Is this a satisfying conception? Has it not been the root cause of strife and bloodshed, of class conflicts and aggressive nationalisms, of violence and wars? The world has, again and again, been dominated by this aggressive conception of life.

Another conception interprets life in terms of multiplication of desires. It is thought by many that the secret of progress or civilisation is complexity. May I submit that to multiply desires is to dissipate life's energies? What is needed is concentration. And the secret of concentration is simplicity. Simplify! Simplify! To convert life into a dance of desires is to miss the very purpose of life. To organise experiences into *shakti*,—is the essential of life. Buddha's great message to his disciples was :—"Go and quench the flames!"

And when they asked him to explain what he meant, he said :—"Look around you! Behold the flames! The flames of passion and anger and greed and attachment and egoism! The flames of desires! Go and put out these flames!" Men suffer because they are victims to desires. In the overcoming of desires is the secret of happiness.

One more conception of life. Life is meant to radiate light. In the ancient *ashramas*, the word for the teacher

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was "guru." He was not merely an instructor. He was, also, a trainer : he trained his pupil's body and mind and will and heart. The Guru was an instructor,—yes. He was a trainer,—yes. He was more. The Guru was a transmitter of light. Great is the world's agony. The piteous need of humanity is light, more light. So the Rishi of the Upanishad prayed :—"Lead me from darkness into light!" And that ancient prayer, so pure in aspiration, so rich in wisdom, I repeat every day :—

*Asato ma sad gamaya!*
*Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya!*
*Mrityor ma 'mritam gamaya!*

Lead me through the unreal into the Real!
Lead me through darkness into Light!
Through death lead me into Immortality!

RELIGION, as I understand it, is an energy to unveil the *Atman* (the Spirit). Self-recollection is the secret of spiritual life. Veil after veil must drop before you may behold the light of the *Atman* within.

Three veils there be which the seeker must distinguish from his real self. (1) There is the veil of the body. How often is the real man confounded with his external environment, the body! (2) There is the veil of desire or appetite. Soul life is not enriched until desires are transformed into aspirations. (3) There is the veil of the *manas* (lower mind). Is not *manas* the source of *ahankara* (egoism)? To grow in the life of the Spirit one must outgrow egoism.

As these three veils are lifted, the larger Selfhood shows forth its beauty. Man contacts the Infinite in the little temple of the heart.

The task of today is to impregnate civilisation with a

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new idealism. Our problems cannot be solved without a spiritual dynamic. It cannot come from an "organisation," however big and efficient. The dynamic which the world needs must flow from the Spirit. The task is tremendous but not impossible.

In the second place, it is necessary to study religious biography. Studies of great lives will draw out the best in you, and discipline your emotions. Mere "doctrines" will not help much. What is needed is contact with some of those who by self discipline have attained to a measure of the living fullness of truth and love.

In the third place, you must be obedient to the supreme law of spiritual life,—the law of sharing. Share the best in you with others! Some day this body,—this earthly house,—will perish : but it has been built for spiritual ends. These,—the spiritual values of life,—will persist when all else has passed away. Share them with others!

Out of sharing and self-dedication grows discrimination, and you are able, more and more, to distinguish between the Real and *maya*.

You are led on to see the Real, the *Atman*, within you. It is your Inner Self, the *Antaryamin*.

Once you glimpse the beauty of the Self within you, you are on the Path which, if you would but tread with patience, perseverance, courage and humility, will link you in the service of love with the great helpers of humanity.

The light of love will fill your heart,—love for all, all races, all nations, all men, all creatures, all forms of the cosmic life.

And filled with such love, your heart will be a hymn of thanksgiving to the All-Love. Your life will be a singing star.

Thou *hast* not a soul! Thou *art* a soul! Stand up in thy true dignity, brother! Stand up and declare thy divinity!

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Say, I am a soul! I shall not be a human machine. I shall not let myself be dominated by customs and creeds. I am of the *Atman*, a soul in the World-Soul! I am a son of the Immortal and claim freedom as my heritage!

THERE are stages in the growth of the larger consciousness. Is sin-consciousness, also, a stage? From it we pass on to reconciliation consciousness through repentance. With this consciousness comes a feeling of a transmutation, a rebirth, a new creation. At last comes the stage when the consciousness is one of at-one-ment with the one. The human moves in the Divine, as the fish in the sea. This mystic union with God in all finite relations is life's highest attainment. The growth of this larger consciousness has its laws.

(1) One of them is *prakriti-sanga* or contact with nature. Four things, specially, fill me with a sense of the Infinite :—

(a) The desert. I am a child of the desert. When I think of my native-land,—Sind,—I think of these two :—the desert and the caravan. The desert is to me a symbol of the Infinite : the caravan is a symbol of life's journey speeding to the Infinite.

(b) The mountains. Blessed are the Himalayas! They commune with the Eternal.

(c) The sea. I have felt the fascination of the sea from the beginning of my days. The Indian Ocean,—to see it is to escape "personality" and breathe an atmosphere of the Infinite.

(d) The midnight sky. It fills me with a sense of wonder. The midnight sky is a call to children of the Earth :—"Ye are of the Infinite."

(2) Another law is *Sat-sanga* rightly emphasised in Hindu scriptures. *Sat-sanga* is contact with the True,

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the Good. Read the lives of saints. Keep their days sacred. The saints are not dead. Pilgrimages to places are, in many cases, anything but inspiring. Pilgrimages to saints are essential to spiritual progress.

(3) Yet a third law : may I name it *Sva-sanga?* Fellowship with thyself, thy deeper Self. It is the God-Self within thee. Commune with it through silence, meditation, and prayer.

In the morn I saw two little boys on the top-floor of a big block of building. Quietly the two little ones stood up,—watching! From the Watch-tower of Eternity, the great Watchers, the *Devas*, the Angels, the divine Helpers, survey thy strivings and thy struggles. Therefore, be strong! Thou strugglest not alone. Thou fightest the good fight in the presence of a Great Host.

He is the Master of masters, the *Sat-Guru*. And He is seated in the "cavity" of your heart. To enter into this *yoga* is to be filled with love and to realise that true love is *yagna*, is sacrifice. Self-realisation is sacrifice, and sacrifice is self-realisation. And this *yagna* is two-fold :— (i) the *yagna* of *manas*, i. e. restraint or sacrifice of the lower mind,—the faculty of calculation and prudence; (ii) the *yagna* of the "psychic" nature or the desire-principle. This two-fold *yagna* means the sacrifice of "egoism," the sacrifice of "personality." I sometimes say :—Behind all "personality" stands the Super-Purusha. The Krishna-Light, the Christ-Light shines in glory when the veils of "ego" are withdrawn. Not till the lower hath sacrificed itself may the Spirit of Love be richly manifested. To be impersonal is to enter into Love.

There is a Hidden Self, the Krishna-Self, in each that will not be satisfied with the things often sought. That Self is in a region unsuspected, undiscovered, but sometimes it makes its presence felt. The Hidden Self appears, and

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it manifests itself in many ways. Sometimes you stand on a mountain height. You see nature clothed with wondrous beauty. The thrill of a new experience passes through you. The Krishna-Self has made its power felt. You serve a sick friend, and in the silence of your sorrow, at an hour when the world's voices are asleep, the Krishna-Self appears and you glimpse a little of the meaning of life. You listen to an idealist, you see a servant of God, you hear a speech or song, and you feel you are become a new man. You resolve to be a servant of the Ideal.

In many ways does the Hidden Self appear. You close the doors : but, again and again, the Larger Self opens one or the other of them and looks at you, and you feel you are greater than you thought you were. The Hidden Self is your deepest Self. And to live aright is to fight your battles at the bidding of this Self.

Doubts have their value as elements in the discipline of Truth. Only let the doubts be honest. There is a scepticism that is spiritual. There is an agnosticism born in the heart of wisdom. To stifle spiritual scepticism is to isolate religion from influences of the Spirit of Truth. Abelard writes :—"For the first key to wisdom is called interrogation, diligent and unceasing. By doubting we are led to inquiry, and from inquiry we perceive truth."

The quest for Truth is not a wanderlust for the impossible. The quest is for the laws of life. Yet who will say he knows the complete system of the laws, the absolute Truth? In physical science, Einstein has taught us the doctrine of relativity. In metaphysics, Bergson has shown how difficult it is to completely disentangle reason from desires. Common-sense is enough to suggest that beings higher or lower than we would have a different "time space" than we have elaborated.

(4) Let us worship Him in life. True mysticism,

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*Vedanta*, is not sundered from *dharma*,—the obligations and appointments of life. All things, all creatures, we read, are a "body" of the *Atman*. The "Self," we read, "must be seen through hearing, thinking and reflecting." We are to worship the Self in the exercise of our natural functions. Again and again, the teaching is given that *vidya* itself is not open to him who will neglect *karma*. And the highest form of *karma* is sacrifice!

Many of the Hindu sages were not ascetics who stood aloof from life. They worshipped the Lord in life. Several were good householders. Some, indeed, influenced with their counsels the conduct of kings and shaped the laws of the land. They entered into the great realm of silence but they were, also, men of action. These sons of silence were, also, servants of the people. And India fell into a state of distracted anarchy when she ceased to worship the Lord in life. Many of her sons put on the yellow robe giving up the simple duties of life. Many in the pride of ceremonial religion, looked down upon millions of their countrymen as untouchables. Sons of India ceased to be sons of Liberty,—ceased to respond to the call of life,—and India fell.

Will India be great again? Then must we worship the *Atman* in life, realising the truth that religion and service are inseparable. For to worship God in life is to fight injustice, is to combat wrong, is to oppose the autocrat who sins against the weak, is to stand boldly for great human values above caste and privilege and creed. Not till we strive to worship God in life may India hope to be a truly free nation. And if the West worshipped God in life, it would not suffer from the orgy of industrialism or that cult of domination which has resulted, again and again, in wars and violence. Europe's *avidya* has been the world's great tyrant.

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If you will do your *dharma*, strive to worship His will every day. And to worship His will is to work with Him. What a privilege He gives us to be His comrades! The science of the *Atman* is the science of *shakti*. And *shakti* flows in the measure in which we respond to, and cooperate with, the *Atman*, the Spirit.

(5) One of the ways to co-operate is to be faithful to Him in little things. The craving for the "big" is unspiritual. Don't pick and choose. Accept what comes from Him. It comes for your discipline. Accept it in faith. Some day you will see that your little task, your small sphere, was the best for you. Do your little duty! In little things comes God to greet us. The more you run after the big or great, the more you recede from Him. Be of the little ones, and affirm your Divinity. No matter how small the sphere, it is the best for you,—if it be a sphere of *swadharma*. All *dharmas* are good. But your own,—*swadharma*,—is the best for you. For it brings you nearer to God. This, too, indicates the right attitude to work or activity. Religion is not inaction. Activity is good except when it prevents your progress to God. Such activity is interference. True activity is that which is demanded by *swadharma*. There is no one *dharma* for all. Follow your own *dharma*,—*swadharma*. It is determined by the type and level of the stage of your growth. Your *swadharma* is what you should do according to the call of your evolution.

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# THE VISION OF THE RISHIS*

To this beautiful spot I came but a few days ago. I came as a pilgrim to this Himalayan home. I came to receive your blessings. You all have blessed me abundantly.

This *ashrama* is meant to be a family, a spiritual family. You are about to go out of it to do your work in different spheres of life. What may I offer you on the eve of your departure? I offer you flowers of love.

One flower there is which they call "forget-me-not." I offer it to every one of you :—"Forget-me-not." My name and form,—forget them! *Nama* and *rupa* belong to the plane of *maya*. But forget not the message I have given to you in different ways. These lips have, in weak words, uttered the message : but the message is not mine. The message is of the Rishis. In it is India's hope, the world's big hope.

For the Rishis are not dead. Their message is not dead. It has a vital value for the modern world. You need the message of the Rishis to reconstruct and revitalize the nation, to rebuild humanity. All I wish to say to you is :—See that you are true and loyal to that message. This *ashrama* will not fulfil its larger purpose if it does not pass on the message of the Rishis. A mighty future must we build : we must study modern science and the socio-economic forces of the modern world. But we must, also, study and apply to modern conditions the great ideals which may make India a vital nation. To ignore the message of the Rishis is to invite spiritual starvation.

In one picture and in one ceremony is embodied the vision of the Rishis. Each vital nation embodies its

* From an address to the students of the Shakti Ashram, Rajpur.

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vision of the Ideal in some picture or pictures, some figure or figures of art. Germany has played a great part in the history of modern nations. I was in Berlin before the world war. What did I see at the gateway of the great city? There stood a great figure,—a statue of a gracious lady representing science. Germany's vision is that of science and scientific "*Kultur.*" Germany was and still is, I think, a scientific nation. Great is the vision of science : and we in this country must study science, more and more, if we would rebuild the nation. Great is the vision of science : great, but not adequate. For you can misuse science for destructive ends. Science has invented death rays and deadly nuclear weapons. Science can be God's instrument or a satanic weapon.

Great was Greece,—ancient Greece. She had thinkers like Plato and Socrates, and dramatists like Euripides and Aristophanes. She, also, had great statesmen. The greatest of them was Pericles, a gifted statesman. He set his stamp upon his country as not many statesmen in the world's history have done. Pericles built Athens on a magnificent scale. He engaged the services of a great artist and sculptor named Pheidias. This master-sculptor built a statue of the Goddess named Athena,—the guardian deity of Athens. She reflects the very soul of ancient Greece,—reflects the ideal of Beauty which Greece worshipped as the supreme vision of life.

Beauty has a spiritual quality. Beauty links us with the Beautiful. The Rishis of India embodied their vision in a picture and a ceremony. The picture is that of Saraswati. She is the Goddess of knowledge, of culture. The "Shakti Ashrama" is meant to be a school of culture,—the culture of *shakti*. And a mark of true culture is simplicity. Saraswati is represented as being simple. The "Shakti Ashrama" should be a home of simple life. I ask you to be simple in dress and diet. There is something even more important.

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It is inner simplicity. You seek knowledge. Let knowledge grow from more to more. But let it not make you proud. Saraswati, clad in simple garb, is a picture of humility. This is inner simplicity. Today, young men go out of colleges with pride in their hearts : so it is they can do so little. They are too proud to be in touch with the masses. Infinite is the realm of knowledge : and the more you know, the more you feel how little you know. True knowledge, therefore, makes one humble.

I said the Rishis embodied their vision of knowledge and life in a picture and a ceremony. The picture is that of Saraswati the simple. The ceremony is that of fire. This fire-ceremony is to me a most impressive one. Often, as I have watched the flame, my eyes have been touched with tears and I have prayed :—"Grant me strength, O Lord, to give to young men this one message :—Be sons of the Flame!" O you that are young,—you, so many of you,—have become cold, inert, lifeless. You have become materialists,—disciples of matter.

May God so bless this Ashrama that in your hearts may be kindled again a flame of new life. Be flame-like, full of life. Be sons of *shakti*. And *shakti* does not mean merely *shakti* of the body : that is necessary but is not enough. *Shakti* does not mean only energy of mind : that, too, is necessary but is not enough. *Shakti* is strength,— of body and mind, of will and *Atman*. The flame is a symbol of the spirit of *shakti*. Therefore I say :—Worship the flame. India needs flaming hearts. If in every province there be even a few young men filled with the flaming love for the Rishis' ideals, then, indeed, there is hope for the nation.

There is a pretty little poem not much known but pregnant with a message for the young. The poem is named "The Youth and the Sage." A young man comes to a Rishi, a Sage, and wishes to know the meaning of life

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The young man is troubled with questions concerning the "whence and whither and why" of life. He has doubts : he is perplexed by the problem of existence and he feels that none may solve "the riddle in his room." This young man comes out of his room, comes to the sage for solution of the riddle of life. The sage tells him a number of things which there is no time to tell. Among them are three beautiful thoughts which I wish to pass on you. The saint says to the youth :—"Blessed is he who bows before the One Sublime. Blessed is he who walks with trusting steps the bridge of time. Blessed is he who humbly prays, 'May I be a sacrifice unto Thee!'

(1) "Blessed is he who bows before the One Sublime." Here is the secret of the true spirit of culture and religion. It bows before the One Supreme, in silent reverence. Culture is not showy : religion is not noisy : spirituality is not controversial. Don't make a show of religion but go about in life with deep silent reverence for the One Sublime.

(2) "Blessed is he who walks with trusting steps the bridge of time." Trust one another! Trust India and humanity. Be not cynics. Walk with trusting steps the bridge of time. India will advance and achieve.

(3) Blessed is he who humbly says :—"May I be a sacrifice to Thee !" May God so bless you that you may spend your lives in service of the poor! So may you rebuild this ancient gifted nation! God and the Rishis need not money, not wealth, not shouts and shows, excitement and noise,—but instruments of silent service. May God and the Rishis bless you, so that you may be taken up as instruments of silent service! For not in shouts and shows, but in silent service, in little, daily acts of self-offering will India be born again, and our Mother,—Divine Humanity,—be newly blessed.

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# THE GREAT-SOULED GANDHI*

FIVE continents paid homage to Gandhi. An American journalist said of him :—"His influence is immeasurable." But these words are, to my mind, an under-estimate of his tremendous power. Gandhi became,—and through him India became,—great in the life of the world.

Gandhi had a genius for action. A great philosopher of Europe,—Schopenhauer,—discusses the question :—"What is genius?" Schopenhauer says :—"I see genius in the world of intellect." But there is genius, also, in the world of will. Gandhi was a man of tremendous will. Of him the French scholar, Professor Martineau, wrote:—"We must honestly admit that Gandhi gave the whole world the example of one of the strongest wills that humanity has ever seen."

Yes,—it was a mighty will Gandhi had. But there is something higher than might. Gandhi's will was not only mighty : it was sanctified. For Gandhi had surrendered his will to the Lord. Gandhi's life was a life of *yagna*.

Arjuna's will was joined to the will of Sri Krishna : and Arjuna's life become heroic, fruitful. Gandhi's will was surrendered at the Lotus-Feet of the Lord : and so this man, small in size,—some called him a "little man,"—shook the mighty British empire as none else could do.

I think of Gandhi as "the man with a lantern" in the story. Some of you, perhaps, know that little story of the man who had, in his hands, a lantern. And with the lantern in his hand, he went from house to house, from cottage to cottage, saying :—"Where art thou, brother?

* From an address. Oct. 2 is sacred as the birth-anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

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Still asleep?" There was magic in his words. And when he said, "where art thou, my brother?" the man, half asleep, woke up and answered :—"I am here! I am here!" And one by one, they rose and followed the light of this man,—this simple man with a lantern in his hand. One by one, men awoke : one by one, men and women arose, saying :—"We follow thee!"

So it happened in the case of Mahatma Gandhi. When Gandhi appeared on the Indian scene, so many of us were living a life of ease and indifference. He came,—he, in whom the spirit of India revealed itself,—Gandhi came! he went from village to village, from cottage to cottage, and in answer to his affectionate call, the people woke from slumber and said :—"We are here, Master! to follow thee!"

An English journal, reviewing Gandhi's *My Experiments with Truth*, wrote some years ago :—"India was fortunate in getting Gandhi's guidance. And under his simple leadership, India marched on to independence."

How significant these words,—"simple leadership!"

Yes,—simple was he and humble, and a lover of God was he, and a servant of man and a teacher of humanity. May he become an inspiration to many in India! Painfully have I noticed that we are forgetting him. For what is it to remember? To remember is to follow in the footsteps of the beloved. Some of us call him "Master," and then, with tear-touched eyes, I say to myself :—"Where, O Gandhi, where art thou in our daily life?" In our daily life and living are we simple? Are we humble? Do we think of the village-folk? Do we share the riches of our life with the poor?

May many in many parts of India follow in the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi and bring forward the day quickly when India may, again, be a teacher of humanity, a servant of all the nations of the earth!

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# THE SPIRIT OF REJUVENATION*

My message to all students is :—Be young!

(1) Therefore, build up the body. If you will maintain youth, see that you keep the body pure and strong. To be young is to be healthy and radiant.

(2) Take care, also, of the sub-conscious. The foundations of character are laid deep down in the sub-conscious. The conscious self is easily taken care of. But there is the sub-conscious self : it does not come into the day-light but operates in private hours and at night and in sleep. The sub-conscious shapes us more than many of us care to know. Have you seen a phonographic plate? On its disc the singer makes a record. The disc is so sensitive that it captures every note, every tune, even the gentle cough of the singer. And the phonograph reproduces everything registered by the sensitive disc. Such a disc is the sub-conscious. The conscious self reproduces at one time or another what the sub-conscious registers. Therefore, be careful of even little thoughts, desires and suggestions. They sink in silently, almost imperceptibly : they rise to the surface under proper stimuli.

(3) Strive on! In the larger college of life you will meet with many difficulties. In the face of them all stand strong, unafraid. Strive on! Faults, imperfections, lapses,—let them not dishearten you. Strive on! "The joy of life," Tennyson says, "is the steep ascent!"

Yesterday was my silence day, and I spent a good portion of it, thinking of Buddha and going through a beautiful book recently published on the life of Buddha by a French author. A moving account is given in this book of the passing

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of the Buddha. By him is Ananda, the St. John of Buddhism, for Buddha loved Ananda tenderly. And Ananda says to the Master :—"For many misdeeds I wish to be forgiven!" And Ananda asks for the Master's parting message. Then says the Buddha :—"Do not grieve, Ananda! Do not despair! Continue in the right path. Let *dharma* be your guide! Never cease to strive!" What hope, what strength in these words of the Blessed One :—"Never cease to strive!"

There, then, is the three-fold gospel of rejuvenation :—Build up the body, take care of the sub-conscious self and strive on! When the storm is raging and the night is starless and the darkness deepens and you feel that you are alone,—alone in the struggle, alone in the fight for truth and right,—say not even then that the struggle naught availeth, but strive on! In courage born of the consciousness that the Law never fails for the Law is ever good and ever true, strive! And so help in the building of true Freedom once again in this Ancient land, and in that true Freedom find the fulfilment of your life and life's noblest aspiration.

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## FRANCIS,—THE FAKIR*

St. Francis reminds me of some of the Rishis of India, some of the fakirs and dervishes of the East. A pretty picture of the fakir is given us in the *Gulistan* :—"The fakir does not possess anything, and is not possessed by any one."

Brought up as a prince, he flings away riches : he believes in the beauty of poverty. He moves out from place to place : he has no money in his pocket. Money is a burden! He goes out to preach with light steps, with joy in his heart! He washes dishes in other people's kitchens : he begs bread from door to door. But he is cheerful, happy : there is a song on his lips.

In the cross is perfect joy,—this realises Francis. Therefore he kisses the lepers and is happy to be a servant of the poor.

"Rejoice," he says, "when you converse with persons who are mean and despised by the world!" His is no hunger-born socialism. His is a socialism of the Spirit sung in rapturous songs and lived, today, by some of the dervishes and fakirs of the East. Francis meets a poor man laden with a heavy burden, and lifting the load on his shoulders, carries it for him. Francis washes the feet of the lepers and cleanses their wounds. He takes off his new clothes and gives them to a soldier poorly clad!

In love and utter simplicity, Francis mingles with the poor. He understands what a blessing it is to belong to the brotherhood of the poor. "It were a quicker journey to God from a hut," he says, "than from a palace." And poorer and purer than the "poor" are birds and beasts. How much Francis loves them!

A youth has caught a number of turtle-doves and is taking

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them to market. He meets Francis on the way. "I pray thee give me these gentle birds," says the saint. The good youth gives them all. And Francis receives them into his bosom, talks to them tenderly, builds nests for them all!

A fisherman brings to Francis a water fowl. Francis accepts the bird, then opens his hands to let it fly away. Another fisherman brings to him a great fish alive. Francis puts it back into the water of the lake. He is tender even to earthworms, picking them up when walking lest they be crushed under foot. He speaks to the swallows, he preaches to birds. He tames the wild wolf, calling it "brother." He gives honey to the bees in winter so that they should not perish from cold.

Bare-footed and clad in a brown robe, he goes on his mission of help and healing, greeting every passer-by on the road :—"Brother! the Lord give you His peace!" His wealth, his wisdom, his joy are in the Cross. And in all his wanderings he bears in his heart the ringing words of his great Master:—"He that would save his life must lose it."

His gentle lovely figure hath ravished my heart, and I lift up my eyes to him, again and again, in this age of many creeds and much confusion. Burdened are the churches in East and West with outgrowths of ecclesiasticism and tradition. A new simplification of life is the need of civilisation. A simple message is what the world waits for. Hence the value of a new study of St. Francis. The nations cannot escape him. His gaze has gone through them. It is the gaze of a God-intoxicated fakir! In him anew the Kingdom of Grace is come! Through him a new passion has passed into the life of man. Seven centuries and more have not exhausted this new passion, this new vision, of the cross. In Francis the fakir I behold the Face of Chirist.

*Ecce Homo!*

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## IS NOT THE ANIMAL, TOO, MY BROTHER?

THE nations are wandering, today, in a "jungle" of "civilisation." The nations love the violent. They trample upon the great vision of the One-life-in-all. Modern civilisation is baptised in blood. Even India is forgetting her ancient vision of reverence for life.

The soul of India has never countenanced the killing of creatures. When the great scriptures of India speak of "*yagna*," they refer to "internal sacrifice," the sacrifice of egoistic, self-seeking impulses, the sacrifice of the animal within us.

The Indian Government has yet much to do in the way of protecting animals. A Free India, I continue to hope, will abolish animal slaughter. The Indian Government, I am happy, has adopted Ashoka's *Dharma-chakra* as the symbol of New India. May the people of India pay reverent homage to the spirit of Ashoka and Ashoka's ideal!

I have heard "educated" Indians speak, echoing the words of some western books, of "humane" slaughter! As well might we speak of "humane" murder! Stop all slaughter!

Modern civilisation has gone astray, for it thinks from the head, not the heart. If, indeed, life is one, is not the animal, too, my brother? And am I not his keeper?

Again and again, I have felt within me that when the life of man becomes purer, and nobler, will not man realise that he must have reverence for life, for all forms of life? And growing daily in reverence, must I not grow in the thought that my life is linked up with all life, and the life of bird and beast is linked with me? Must I not grow in sympathy and helpfulness, in devotion and love? And must I not in this sympathy and love receive the call to union with the Divine will that is the creative will of the cosmos?

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# THE SPIRIT OF CULTURE*

MAY St. Mira's become a Community-centre filled with the love of beauty and the thirst for truth and the aspiration to service and sacrifice!

I wish the Mira Institutions to become a picture,—a symbol,—of the great ideals of culture. A picture reveals : may St. Mira's Institutions reveal the soul of culture!

(1) The soul of culture is courtesy. The man of little "knowledge" chafes and frets : he argues : he imposes his opinions on you. The man of culture has a "knowledge of relative values" and so does not insist nor dogmatise. Half educated people insist on a slavish obedience. The man of culture has the gift of gentleness.

(2) Such a man, therefore, has humility of spirit. He accepts the teaching which Dostoevsky gives of "the immeasurable and equal value of every living human soul." A man may pass University examinations and yet be an "ass." He may read a thousand books yet be no better than a "boor." He may accumulate information, yet be a sectarian, a credalist, a communalist, a narrow nationalist. Such a man shouts and scolds : he pushes : he quarrels!

(3) Book-knowledge stays in the head : culture flows into life. Book-knowledge is heavy : culture gives understanding and so reduces the friction of life. Culture weaves understanding and gentleness into actual living.

(4) No one is truly cultured who does not show courtesy to those whom accident has made his inferiors,—to the poor, the needy, the negligible, the weak! Call him not cultured who speaks harshly to his servants or writes impolitely to his clerk. The one great commandment

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of culture is :—"Thou shalt not be unkind!" The man of culture is, essentially, one of self-control and sympathy.

(5) He is, essentially, a man of reverence. His reverence, as Goethe pointed out, is three-fold :—reverence for what is above, reverence for what is around, reverence for what is beneath him. He rises above creeds : he would worship in every shrine. He sings with Jalal-ud-din Rumi :—

*In the adorations and benedictions of true men*
*The praises of all the Prophets are blended together :*
*All their prayers into one river flow :*
*For one is He to whom they go !*
*And so all religions are only One Religion.*

In the "Sanctuary" of St. Mira's let the pupils learn to respect all prophets and saints, all Rishis and revealers of the True, the Good, the Beautiful.

(6) And he who will grow in culture will cultivate love of nature. He would escape from crowds and noises to find in nature that joy which the cinema and the circus cannot give. Let the Mira Institutions be surrounded by trees and flowers and fountains of flowing water! Let the Mira Institutions have a garden, a park, a Children's Park, which may become a beauty-spot of nature! Let there be upon it, also, the peace of flowers and green fields and mild-eyed cows and impartial stars!

In such an atmosphere let the Mira students grow, blessed by the Rishis and saints, the poets and thinkers, the sages and heroes of humanity,—blessed, too, by nature, by sun and wind, by warmth and cold, by earth and grass and air and rain!

So may St. Mira's become a centre of true culture! So may flow into the hearts alike of the teachers and the students of St. Mira's the unspeakable poetry of life flooding them with joy and the strength to serve society and the nation!

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# AN AMERICAN RISHI

LIFE is a quest, a pilgrimage. Emerson was a pilgrim of eternity. Born in 1803 (May 25), he passed on in 1881 (April 27). I was a child when he died. As I grew in years, I came in contact with his mind.

Two came to Sind from Bengal,—Bhai Nand Lal Sen and Swami Upadhyaya. I came in touch with both at an early age. The latter's influence on me increased. Him I regard as one of the inspirers of my life. He taught me to study the life of Christ. The Cross has continued to be the inspiration of my life. Swami Upadhyaya and Bhai Nand Lal gave me my first introduction to Emerson. I began to read him when I was in the matriculation class. He grew upon me with my growing years.

I revered Emerson as a Rishi, a Revealer, not merely an interpreter, of life. In an early eassay which I wrote, as a College undergraduate, I spoke of "Emerson,—in tune with the East" as a "geographical mistake." As the years passed, I realised that the Rishis were not the monopoly of India. Rishis have appeared alike in East and West. In all climes and races, in all epochs and ages of history have appeared the Rishis,—seers of the "Open Secret."

Emerson was a "seer." There is inspiration in his words : thoughts "came" to him. He went to the woods to "listen." He learned in the school of nature. He loved it as the "city of God." In nature, "beauty breaks in everywhere." To Emerson, nature is a "differential thermometer detecting the presence or absence of the divine sentiment in man."

He, also, learnt of the Wisdom of the East. He read Hafiz in translation. He read the *Bhagavad Gita*. In one of his "letters," published some years ago, he referred

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to the Gita as an "Empire of thought."

Emerson was a scholar,—and more. He was a preacher,—and more. He was a poet,—a wisdom-proclaimer, a teacher, a prophet, a sage. I have been impresesd with five notes in his teaching :—

(1) Sincerity. He asks us to "be," and not "seem."

(2) Quiet. In quiet is strength. "A gentleman makes no noise,"— says Emerson.

(3) Religion is life. Religion is not theology. "Life is ahead of theology," says Emerson. It is the teaching of the Rishis of the Upanishads. It is the teaching of the Gita. In every one is the *Atman*. Your soul is greater than you know! In every one is the "Over-soul"! Religion, then, is realisation, not tradition. To be religious is to live in the Present, the Eternal Now, the Infinite Everlasting.

(4) Self-reliance. In you is a mighty *shakti*, a hidden force of the Eternal. Therefore rely on your self. "Trust thyself : every heart vibrates to that iron-string," says Emerson. And again :—"Self trust is the essence of heroism." "Never imitate," said Emerson. In that great address, Emerson said :—"We will walk on our feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds." Beware of imitation, youngmen! Dare to be yourselves! Don't fear to stand alone!

(5) Sanctuary of the Heart. Emerson asks every one to make his heart a "Sanctuary." How? Let love fill the heart, and let love "become more impersonal everyday." We talk of reforms. There is no true reform without regeneration. Not debates, not controversies, but love will rebuild communities and nations. The power to build is the power of the Spirit,—*atmashakti*. Release it, if you will truly serve society. Emerson says :—"All reform should let the soul have its way through us!"

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## INDIA'S SUPREME MAN OF CULTURE

THE real history of India is not in politics nor in carnage, but in contributions to culture made by men of Illumination. One of them was Shankara.

Rare is the birth of such men. A Shankara is born in the cycle of several centuries.

In the humble house of a villager was this great one born. His father died when he was a boy. His mother looked after him and loved him dearly. She pinned all her hopes in him. But the Call came to him, and he resolved to dedicate his life to the service of the Hindu Race. Shankara was a man of destiny. And of such as he, God Himself is the Guardian.

When I think of his influence upon millions of India, I marvel at the man and his achievements. I regard him as the supreme figure in the movement of idealistic philosophy.

He brought back to life the Ancient Faith. He saved Hinduism in a period when religion was entangled in rites and ceremonies. Ritualism, he called *karma* : and he pointed out that *karma* could not save. He won the battle against nihilism and India could hope again. He made Hinduism dynamic. He created an order of *sanyasins*, men of inner renunciation : he made them guardians of the Hindu *Dharma*. "Your only possession," he said, "is *Atman*, the Spirit."

Shankara and Kant are the two greatest intellects the world has thrown up. Shankara's Vedanta and Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* reveal two master-minds of humanity. Yet Shankara is greater even than Kant. For Shankara is not, like Kant, merely a first-rate thinker. Shankara is, also, an organiser, a man of action, and a

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*bhakta* (devotee). In Shankara is a marvellous blend of wisdom and action, of *gnana* and *karma*,—and *bhakti* (devotion). Shankara is one of the greatest teachers and revealers of the Gita. And he became a saviour of the Hindu race.

In the days he appeared, Hindu society was assailed by over sixty sects, many of them denying God and preaching rank ritualism. Shankara had the courage to stand up against the atheistic and materialistic cults of the age. Shankara re-proclaimed the doctrine of the *Atman* (the Spirit). Shankara declared :—"Thou art Divine!" Shankara taught that an Eternal Energy is hidden in every one. "Awake the Eternal!" was the message of Shankara and the Rishis to India and the nations.

We live, today, in a period of the great "wandering of the nations." For democracy has proved a failure and the rule of the people is become the rule of money and sovereignty of the politician. Such a rule destroys culture. Shankara, India's supreme man of culture, pleaded for rule of the best, for sovereignty of men of non-possession.

Disintegration is widespread in the life and thought of Europe, today. A new barbarism is advancing to engulf the West. India, too, is corroded with the touch of greed and gold. India is eager for industrialism and power. India is forgetting her Shankara and her Saints. If India could thrill again to their message, there is yet hope that she might lead the world out of the mas-age of these days to a new Age of Light!

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## THE WISDOM OF A VILLAGE-MARTYR

I heaved a sigh of relief when I read a letter written by a simple villager, several years ago. The name of the villager was Peter. He lived in a village in Yugoslavia. He married a girl named Maria. She was pregnant when the Germans occupied Peter's village and seized his home. Peter ran to the woods and joined the other Yugoslavs in their fight against the Germans. Peter was soon caught and shot by Nazi soldiers. But before he died, he wrote on a scrap of paper a letter in pencil. Yugoslavs found Peter's body and the letter.

What a marvellous letter! It reveals a radiant soul. Peter scrawled it on a scrap of paper in a forest. The letter reminds one of some of the *sutras* the Rishis of India wrote in *tapobanas* in the long ago. The letter is so superior to the speeches and writings of the great statesmen of the West. The letter is radiant with the wisdom of India's Rishis, is charged with the teaching of Christ,—a teaching which the modern nations have trampled upon with the fierce cry of "progress" and "power."

Here is Peter's letter : its simple eloquence goes into the heart.

> My child! sleeping now in the dark and getting strength for the struggle of birth, I wish you well. At present you have no proper shape, and you do not breathe, and you are blind. Yet, when your time comes, your time and the time of your mother,—whom I deeply love,—there will be something in you which will give you power to fight for air and light. Such is your heritage, such is your destiny as a child born of woman,—to fight for

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light and hold on without knowing why.

May the flame that tempers the bright steel of your youth, never die, but burn always : so that when your work is done and your long day ended, you may still be like a watchman's fire at the end of a lonely road,—loved and cherished for your gracious glow by all good wayfarers who need light in their darkness and warmth for their comfort.

The spirit of wonder and adventure,—the token of immortality,—will be given to you as a child. May you keep it forever with that which always seeks the gold beyond the rainbow, the pasture beyond the desert, the dawn beyond the sea, the light beyond the dark!

May you seek always and strive always in good faith and high courage, in this world where men grow so tired!

Keep your capacity for faith : but let your judgment watch what you believe.

Keep your power to receive everything, only learn to select what your instinct tells you is right.

Keep your love of life but throw away your fear of death. Life must be loved or it is lost : but it should never be loved too well!

Keep your delight in friendship : only learn to know your friends.

Keep your wonder at great and noble things like sunlight and thunder, the rain and the stars, the wind and the sea, the growth of trees and the return of harvests and the greatness of heroes.

Keep your heart hungry for new knowledge.

Now I know I must die and you must be born to stand upon the rubbish heap of my errors. Forgive me for this. I am ashamed to leave you an untidy, uncomfortable world. But so it must be.

In thought, as a last benediction, I kiss your forehead.

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Good night to you,—and good morning and a clear dawn!

In this letter is the spirit of the Vedic bards and the Upanishadic Rishis. They, too, were lovers of life,—lovers of light and the sun and spring, of earth and the stars, of the moon and mountain-heights, of rivers and the forests fashioned into fairness by tall trees and blooming flowers.

Alas! the mad world is still busy at its work of violence and bloodshed. Europe lies prostrate, tired and spent in strength. And the universities of Europe, aspiring to mould new leaders of tomorrow, will know that the world's hope is not in love of money and power but in the spiritual qualities of justice and tolerance and sympathy and self-offering to the Eternal,—so beautifully taught by Sri Krishna to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

And in Peter's letter is a strange mystic light. Not the light of cleverness which we see in the words and actions of Europe's politicians and statesmen,—the light of mind (*manas*), earth-bound and dominated by desire. In Peter's simple letter is another light!

We read in the Arabian Gospel that when Isa (Jesus) came to a gathering and rose to address it, the entire assembly was illumined. Isa radiated light and love. For Isa was simple : and Isa taught that he who would know the Truth must become as a little child.

Will the modern nations become again as little children? Let them read this letter written to a child and keep in their hearts "the spirit of wonder and adventure, the token of immortality," seeking "the dawn beyond the sea and the light beyond the dark." Then, indeed, may East and West together grow and the twain together build a new world for a New Age!

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### Everyone an Angel

THERE is a pretty little story of an angel who dwindled when spoken to harshly, but expanded to full stature and shone with a strange light when spoken to gently and treated lovingly.

Kind words and loving thoughts have healing, beautifying, vitalising effect. Every one is an angel. Harsh words cause shrinkage of the soul : love beautifies and blesses. Every thought of kindness, every act of love emits light. To give light to others is life's greatest privilege.

*

### "I Give Water to All!"

A Sikh gave water to some who were against the Guru, and was taken to task by some who brought him before the Guru to explain his strange conduct. The Sikh's answer was brief and beautiful :—"I give water to all. For in all is the Face of the Guru!" The Guru embraced him and blessed him.

*

### Grow Wings!

I saw a bird sitting on a branch of a tree. The bird was singing, and I said to myself :—"What a sweet song!"

What was the secret of the song? The bird was care-free.

You, too, can sing sweet songs, but you have worries pressing upon you. The bird was sitting on a little branch. But the bird had no worry : the bird had wings so that it could easily fly. And I said to myself :—"Let me be like the bird."

We, too, sit, every one, on a branch of the Tree of Life. You think you have bungalows, mansions, villas, vast treasures. You cannot rely upon them. They are no

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better than the branches of a tree. The things we count upon are like branches : they will break. But don't be anxious! The soul has wings. Trust in Him and do the right. Flatter not the world! Be care-free like the bird and grow wings! Sing the song of thy life!

*

### In Quest of Happiness

At the door of a saint knocks a seeker.

"What seekest thou?" asks the saint.

"In quest of happiness have I wandered many years," is the answer.

The door opens. The seeker sits at the feet of the saint and asks :—"Where is the happiness I have sought and missed?"

And the saint says to him :—"Here are two fruits. If you eat the one, you will understand what happiness is. If you eat the other fruit, you will enter the realm of happiness (*sukhdhama*), but not understand what happiness is. Choose what fruit you will."

And the seeker says :—"Master! I choose the second."

And the saint says :—"You have chosen well. For to understand happiness and not to have it, is to be unhappy. And to go into the realm of happiness is to transcend understanding. They who are truly happy rise above the impotence of speech. They understand not : they speak not : they are !"

*

### Voice of the Little Ones

It was a big gathering. Scholars were there, and men of wealth and fame. And they sang together a song of praise to God. But He sent an angel to them who said :—"The Lord hath sent me to say to you that your gathering will not be blessed without the voice of the little ones."

It is blessings of the "little ones" we need. Not the big but the "little ones" will lead us!

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